The grand Evil discovered:

OR, The Deceitfull

HEART

TRYED and CAST:

Being the Substance of some SERMONS Preached from *Jerem.* XVII. 9.

For the Conviction of *Formalists*, and the Awakening of *Believers* to stand upon their Watch.

BIBL CANT. ACAD.

ALSO,

The Way of the Hearts working, and Precious Remedies against its Devices, are opened and applyed; with other things observed thereunto belonging.

By *P. Flavell* Minister of the Gospel.

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TO THE
READER.

Reader,

IF thou art one who indeed liveſt in the ſtudy of thine own Heart, I am confident this ſhort enſuing Diſcourſe will be welcom to thee: I ſhall make no Plea for its Plainneſs; nor am at all filled with ſolicitous thoughts how to reſcue my ſelf from the Cenſures of a vain deceitful World. If thou wilt entertain and ſtudy it with an honeſt heart, I am confident through Divine goodneſs, it may help thee to a clearer and better ſettlement of thy Eſtate for Eternity, as to that which concerns thee in this preſent World; ſure I am thou wilt find the Argument moſt weighty, and thy Concern therein moſt

important, and woe be unto that Soul which misseth its design.

Now the design of these Papers is, as far as it can to make a true discovery of the Deceits of the Heart, and thereby lead us into a blessed Acquaintance with our selves; and who of us that observes it, and the workings thereof, doth not find it to be so at all times. Now it may be it openly oppoſeth you, and then it secretly insnares and seduceth you; now it carryes you off, drawes you back from God and Duty, Heb. 3. 12. *then it will turn you aside to Sin and Vanity,* Isa. 44. 20. *Now it diverteth you from Duty, then it will make you dead and slothfull in Duty. 'Tis indeed wholly set against all that is good, and hath a thousand wayes to hinder us in our work, and we must expect it will do its utmost: 'Tis a close Enemy, alwayes at hand, and there is no end of its Opposition till Life it self ends; and must we not complain then with blessed* Jeremiah, *That* the Heart is deceitfull a-

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bove all things? *When we moſt reſolve and ſet our ſelves to follow God, and to purſue the work of our immortal Souls, then doth it ſet us moſt back.* Now that thoſe that read may underſtand and find theſe things in themſelves, the Bleſſing of Heaven proſper it in order thereto: The time is coming, when thou that art ſincere ſhalt bid farewell to Sin and ſinning, for thy Heart ſhall then be as thou wouldeſt now have it, and thou ſhalt be like God; for thou ſhalt ſee him as he is, and God ſhall wipe away all tears from thine Eyes: And more particularly, thou wilt find how Deceit oppoſeth the firſt Motions of Grace towards Sinners, and the Law and Grace of God in Believers; which is no more than what the Scripture plainly teacheth concerning it, and Believers evidently find by Experience in themſelves, and doe or may learn from the Examples and Acknowledgments of others: And this is repreſented in ſuch a way as is ſuited unto the Capacity of the weakeſt who is

concerned therein. Now if thou reap any Benefit by these things, bless God, and deny him not an Interest in thy Prayers, who (though in many Afflictions and Temptations) is willing to labour in the glorious Work to which he is called.

I am thine in the Lord,

Phineas Flavell.

Jer. XVII. 9.

The Heart is deceitfull above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?

IN this Scripture you have (1) The Nature of Sin opened, and its Property manifested; it is *deceitfull.* (2) You have its Seat or Subject pointed unto, and this is the Heart; *the Heart is deceitfull,* saith my Text. (3) You have the boundless and universal Extent of this Deceit in comparison with other things; 'tis *deceitful above all things,* saith the Text. (4) You have a great Interrogation, which implies a strong Negation, in these words, *Who can know it?* that is, None can know it.

(1) The Nature of Sin opened; 'tis *deceitful;* No faculty of the Soul, but sin is in it to deprave and vitiate it, and hence when we would do good, evil is present with us, and easily be-

beſets us in what we doe, or are about to do; and for this Reaſon 'tis called *the Old Man*, becauſe of the ſubtilty and deceitfulneſs of its Nature: We muſt watch it in its firſt motions, and firſt and ſmalleſt appearances, or it will threaten a ruinous Prevalency in the Soul. The Souls care ſeldom or never anſwers the danger of its ſtate; it being frequently wounded through the Deceitfulneſs that is in Sin.

(2) The Seat or Subject pointed unto, and this is the Heart, and this the Scripture every where aſſigns it to be; there it takes up its eſpecial reſidence, yea invades and poſſeſſeth the Throne even of God himſelf: And this is the Root of that madneſs and folly that ſhews it ſelf in the Lives of men in the world; there is much filth and folly in the Lives and Actions of men, but this is but the opening of the Veſſel a little, and letting out ſomewhat of that which is laid up and ſtored in it: 'Tis the Heart that is deceitfull and nouriſheth and prompts to ſin. Now the Heart in Scripture is variouſly underſtood, ſometimes for the Mind and Underſtanding, and ſometimes for the Will; ſometimes for the Affections, and ſometimes for the Conſcience; ſometimes for the whole Soul of man, and generally 'tis taken for the whole Soul of Man, not abſolutely, but as it is all one Principle of Moral Operation,

tion, as they all concurre in our doing good or evil: The mind as it enquireth, diſcerneth, judgeth what is to be done, and what refuſed; the Will as it chooſeth or refuſeth and avoids; the Affections as they like or diſlike what is propoſed to them; the Conſcience as it warns and determines, are all together called the Heart: And in this ſence it is that we ſay, the Seat and Subject of Sin is the Heart of Man; here dwelleth our Enemy, this is the Fort and Cittadell of the Tyrant Sin, where it maintains a Rebellion againſt God all our dayes.

(3) The boundleſs and univerſal extent of this Deceit in compariſon with other things, it exceeds *all things*, ſaith the Text, and is incomparably ſo: There is great deceit in the Dealings of Men in the World, great in their Councils and Contrivances, in reference to their Affairs private and publick; great deceit in their Words and Actings; the World is full of Deceit and Fraud; but all this is nothing to the Deceit that is in mans heart towards himſelf; for that is the meaning of the Expreſſion in this place, and not towards others.

(4) You have the Interrogation, which implyes a ſtrong Negation, *Who can know it?* that is, None can know it, and therefore he alone is ſaid to know it; *I the Lord ſearch the heart;*

heart, and hence he takes the honour of searching the heart to be as peculiar to himself and as fully declaring him to be God as any other glorious Atribute of his nature. As we know not the hearts of one another, so neither our own heart as we ought in any case. How many know not the general frame and bent of their hearts, whether it be good or bad, sincere or deceitfull! Hath any the windings and turnings, actings and aversations of his own spirit? Do any know his own light and darkness? Do the secret springs of actings and refuseing in the soul lye before the eyes of any man? Doth any know what will be the inclination and motion of the Mind or Will in such or such a conjunction of things; such a suiting of Objects, and pretence of Reasonings and appearance of things Desireable? All in Heaven and Earth beside the Infinitely Wise God, who sees and knows all things, are wholly ignorant of these things. And thus you have the parts of the Text opened.

Doct. 1. *The heart of man is naturally and unmeasurably deceitfull, and none can know it save God alone.*

My work is here to make discovery, as far as I can, of the Crafts and Treacheries of a Desperately

ſperately deceitfull Heart, and this Diſcovery will reach it in its three Eſtates : *Before Converſion*, *In Converſion*, *after Converſion*.

1. *Before Converſion*, It keeps many men in Ignorance and Blindneſs, as to their Spiritual Condition, all their dayes : What ever elſe they know, they know not themſelves. They know how Rich they are, and the condition of their Bodies, as to Health and Sickneſs, they are carefull to examine ; but as to their Principles reſpecting God and Eternity they are wholly ignorant, through the Deceitfulneſs of their Hearts. The Ground and Reaſon of the Efficacy of this Heart-deceit, with reference to ſelfignorance, is taken from the Faculty of the Soul affected with it. Now Deceitfulneſs properly affects the Mind, and it is this that is principally deceived thereby. If ſin attempt any other enterance upon the Soul, the mind (being in poſſeſſion of its right and Soveraignty) is able to give effectual check thereunto : But where the mind is Darkened the prevalency of Sin and deceit muſt needs be great; and the reaſon hereof is manifeſt, becauſe the Mind or Underſtanding is the conducting, regulating Faculty of the Soul ; and what this fixes on, the reſt of the Faculties of the Soul do greedily affect and chooſe, being capable of no reaſoning or deliberation but what

what that presents unto them: and therefore though the affections ensnared are very troublesome, yet the Mind deceived is most dangerous. So saith the Apostle, *their foolish heart was darkened*, but their *Imagination first became vain*: and this particularly respecteth the Mind, *Rom.* 1. 21. Now this is the eye of the Soul as to Sin, our Selves, God, or the things of God, and without this the rest of the Faculties of the Soul will wander in darkness, in the wilderness of this World, according as any thing with present appearing good shall offer or present it self unto them: if this light in us be darkness, how great is that darkness! if this be betrayed the whole is threatned, and endangered by the ruinous prevalency of sin. But how is this Doctrine despised by many who know of no Deceitfulness in their own hearts and mindes, nor think there is any such blindness in the minds of others, though God complains that *his People perished for lack of knowledge*, *Hosea* 4. 6. yet being ignorant of the Mind and Will of God, and of their own present state as to their well being for eternity; they rush into evil upon every command of sin. While Darkness and Ignorance remain in the Minds of men, whether as to Duty to be performed or sin to be committed, this sin will by no means loose its advantage, but keeps them in bondage thereto through the Ignorance

norance that is in them. And hence we may learn, what is that true knowledge which is acceptable with God. How acceptably do many poor ſouls walk with God? and how exactly do they live who are yet low as to notional knowledge? they know ſo much of their own hearts, that ſin hath not much advantage againſt them: When others high in their Notions give advantage to ſin, even by their own Ignorance; though they perceive it not. Men cannot but apprehend there is Deceit in the World, but that there ſhould be Ignorance and Darkneſs in mens hearts, with reſpect unto themſelves, their Actions, Duties, Wayes; with reſpect unto God and their own Eternal condition, That they cannot apprehend. But ſtill 'tis poſſible there may be in the hearts of men a Blind Self-love ſo far predominant as practically to impoſe falſe apprehenſions and notions of things on the Minds and Affections, with reſpect unto ſin, duty, and their own Eternal ſtate. What diſorder is there in the Faculties of Mens Souls? What remains of ſin inſeparable from them in this Life, accompanied with all manner of ſpiritual deceitfullneſs? What corrupt reaſonings for procraſtinating the moſt important Duties? What inclinations unto undue Confidences and Preſumptions? Yea, what Vanity and Uncertainty poſſeſſeth the Mind? And

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this is the first general wherein lyes the deceitfullneſs of the heart.

2. *The conſtant enmity that is working in the heart againſt God and his Truth, which lyes cloſely covered under this Spiritual Darkneſs.* Now Enmity is a worſe part or effect of the minds Darkneſs, and gives great advantage to the power of ſin. There is indeed Ignorance in all Enmity, but there is not Enmity in all Ignorance, for ſo they are Diſtinguiſhed. And never is the Deceit of the heart more ſecure than when the heart is found in ſuch a Frame. It layes hold in particular of advantages to practiſe upon with its Deceitfulneſs, and therein alſo to put forth its power in the Soul. Now the effect of ſuch a frame in the Soul is this; the Holy and Bleſſed Spirit withdrawes from them and leaves them manifeſtly to that evil and froward Spirit which their darkneſs and ignorance hath begotten and nouriſhed in them. And to this purpoſe doth the Apoſtle exhort to *abſtain from fleſhly luſts which war againſt the Soul*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 11. Mighty difficulties there are to deal with, and great Prejudices muſt be removed in the ſoul, before it can be converted in Gods ordinary way. Great ſtrokes muſt be given to the Conſcience before this can poſſibly be brought about. The cure of the heart under this Diſtemper is as the turning of the Wild Aſs, when furious ſet to purſue her way,

way as the Prophet ſpeaks, *Jer.* 2. 24. The Soul at beſt being plunged into a Courſe of Alienation from the Lord, and the Profeſſion of his wayes; ſcarcely knows what 'tis doing untill it come to the very bottom of all impiety, Prophaneneſs and Enmity againſt God. Some fall into Debauchery and Uncleanneſs; ſome to Worldlineſs and Covetousneſs; ſome to be Perſecutors of the Servants of God, all to the perdition of their own ſouls. When Enmity in the heart riſes up againſt God, his Wayes and Truths, yea, the light of their own Conſciences; how often are men induced for the ſatisfying of a Luſt, to do that which ſhall imbitter their Lives and Damn their Souls. This is enough to Oyl the Wheels of mens utmoſt endeavours, and ſet them at work to purpoſe. And this is the ſecond thing wherein the deceit of the heart is manifeſt, and wherein it ſhews it ſelf to be deſperately wicked.

3. *The conſtant inclination and byaſs of it to evil*: I do not mean an habituall propenſity or inclination unto actual ſin in the Mind or Heart only, but an habitual propenſity unto evil in the ſin, that is in the mind or heart. While a man is in the ſtate of Nature, fully under the power and Dominion of ſin, it is ſaid, *every imagination of his heart is only evil, and that continually, Gen.* 6. 5. It can Act, Produce, Frame, Faſhion nothing but what is evil,

evil; becauſe this natural aptitude unto evil that is in ſin, is a Prevalent Principle in ſuch a one. It is in the heart like poiſon that hath nothing to allay its venemous qualities, and ſo infects what ever it touches. And thus whatever the frame of the ſinners heart be, yet before it be aware, without any provocation or Temptation; when it knows not, it is caſt under the power of Fooliſh and hurtfull luſts. Sin produces its imaginations and contrivances ſecretly and deceitfully in the heart, and ſo prevents the minds conſideration of what it is, or might be about. And this is the reaſon why many a wicked man ceaſes from his duty either wholly or in part, even from the averſation of ſin unto the ſpirituality thereof; which is to give ſin its rule in the ſoul, and truly to obey it in the luſt thereof. And this is the reaſon that when Chriſt comes to work over the ſoul unto the obedience of his Will, all Gods counſells are ſet at nought deſpiſed; not this or that part, *but every councell of God*, *Prov.* 1. 25. The Mind, VVill, and Affections of the ſinner are all kept and ſecured againſt Chriſt: and untill a ſtronger than Satan comes, and diſpoſſeſſeth him, this inclination of the heart to evil will never be changed; but the ſoul remaines under the power thereof, And this is a third diſcovery of the deceitfulneſs of the heart.

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4. The next thing to manifeſt the deceitfulneſs of the Heart, is the Efficacy there is in ſuch deceit of Heart to provoke thoſe that are the Subjects of it to the things that it requireth: Much of its ſecurity, and conſequently, its force and efficacy lies in this; that it is altogether beyond our moſt curious ſearch: We deal with an Enemy whoſe ſtrength we know not, whoſe ſecret retirements we cannot diſcover; and thus 'tis frequently found to be with us when we are ready to conclude ſin quite ruined, in a ſhort time we find it was but out of ſight: the ſoul may perſwade it ſelf all is well, when ſin may be ſafe in the hidden darkneſs of the mind, in the indiſpoſition and ſtubbornneſs of the Will, in the diſorder, vanity, and carnality of the affections; before we are aware of it, we are carried forth ſecretly, either to trample upon ſome by Pride, or ſwallow down others by Covetouſneſs, or to tear in pieces others by Revenge and Cruelty: One way or other doth ſin put forth in us and ſhew the filth, folly, and deadneſs of our Eſtate. There are ſeven abominations (ſaith *Solomon*) in the Heart; which Expreſſion notes perfection and ſtrength, an abſolute compleat number, *Prov.* 26. 25. And they are ſuch abominations as conſiſt in, and are ſtrengthened by deceit: ſo ſaith *Paul*, *The Fleſh luſts againſt the Spirit*, Gal. 5. 17.

And hence ſprings its Efficacy in hindring the Accompliſhment of what we would: its workings are for the moſt part under-earth workings, and being no way diligent and unwearied in the Watch can never ſet themſelves in oppoſition to them; they yield to the importunity and power of Luſt through the imperceptibleneſs of its Actings and firſt Motions in them.

5. It is ſo full of, and frequent in contradictions, ſo that it is not to be obſerved and dealt with according to any conſtant Rule or way of procedure, and it is ingrained in the weary Nature and Conſtitution of many: Others received it from ſomething in their life and Converſation; thus do they ſeem to be made up of contrarieties: this diſcovers a bad Face, and gives them an evil Character and Denomination, and is rarely obſervable but when it ſprings from ſome ſtrong predominant Luſt: this is it in general with the Heart in reſpect of its frame as to Moral good, and evil, duty, and ſin; ſometimes flaming hot, and by and by key-cold; weak, and yet ſtubborn; obſtinate, and yet plyable: thus do our hearts contradict themſelves in their Frames every moment. At ſometimes you would think it were altogether for ſuch a way or work, and ſoon after it is far otherwiſe; none knowing to what it is conſtant and fixed, and ſo know

not

not what to expect from it; and the Reaſon of theſe things is the great confuſion that is brought upon all the faculties of the ſoul by ſin: their firſt Creation was in the moſt abſolute Harmony, the greateſt Union and Per-Perfection; the whole ſoul was in perfect ſubjection and ſubordination to God and his will; Mind, Reaſon, Will, Affections, all were directed by, and referred to God. The Mind makes diſcovery of what is good, and the Will anſwers thereunto in its choice thereof, even to the diſcovery made thereof by the Mind. The Affections follow conſtantly and evenly the conduct of the Mind and Will; and indeed the Minds ſubjection to God in our Primitive ſtate was the moving cauſe of all the Orderly and Harmonious Actings of the Soul, and all the parts of it. This being diſordered and enſnared, and captivated by ſin, all the Faculties thereof move croſs and contrary the one to the other. The Will chuſeth not the good that the Mind diſcovers, the Affections delight not in that which the Will chuſeth, but all are croſs and contrary the one to the other: and this is the Fruit of our Covenant-breaking-fall in *Adam*, which loſt us all diſpoſition to, and deſire after ſuch a Relation and Enjoyment: Sometimes the Will leads, and the Judgment follows; and many times the Affections that ſhould obey in their place, and follow the dictates of

the Mind and Judgment; theſe get the Rule and Dominion in the Soul, and make the whole Soul a Servant, yea, a Slave unto them; and this is the Reaſon the Soul or Heart is made up of ſo many contradictions in its ways and actings: Sometimes the Mind and Judgment Rules, and then all is ready for willing Obedience and Duty, and all things are fair; but immediately the deceit of the Will or Affections ſhews it ſelf, and the whole is carried away to fulfill ſome curſed Luſt or other, and the caſe is altered; and this makes the heart deceitful above all things: It agrees not with, nor is conſtant to it ſelf in any one thing; it hath no Government or Conduct that is ſtable, and being thus unfixed 'tis impoſſible to make Judgment what its Frame or bent is; for it knows not, nor can know its own inclination: and thus you have another diſcovery of the hearts deceitfulneſs.

6. The next particular wherein the deceit of the heart is manifeſted, is the full and fair promiſes the heart makes upon the firſt appearances of things; and this alſo ariſeth from the ſame cauſe as the former: It may be, the Affections are touched and wrought upon, and then the Affections ſwaying and influencing the whole heart, cauſe it to appear in a fair frame, all is well ſeemingly; but ſoon after the whole Frame is changed: the Mind was not at all affected

fected or changed; the affections a little acted their parts, and are gone off withered and dead, and all the fair promiſes of the heart are departed with them. Lo here a deceiving and a deceived heart, who can deal with it? Unſearchableneſs added to Deceitfulneſs, increaſeth the difficulty of dealing with ſin, as it hath taken up its ſeat and reſidence in the heart. Now theſe falſe promiſes do but promote the intereſt and advantage of ſin: who can expreſs the Treacheries and Deceits that lie in the heart of man, even when it makes fair and full promiſes upon the firſt appearance of things? it is not for nothing that the Holy Ghoſt ſo expreſſeth it, it is deceitfull above all things, uncertain in what it doth, falſe in what it promiſeth, and never makes good one of a thouſand of its own engagements. And hence the Lord cautions the people to look to it, leſt their own hearts ſhould entice and deceive them. They are full of promiſes, but theſe are but as a morning Dew, and as an early Cloud they vaniſh away. The heart frequently makes compoſition where there is no reconciliation; and willingly enters a truce where yet there is no peace, and with this frame 'tis ſatisfied and pleaſed, becauſe hereby it ſeldom comes to do execution upon ſin, or effectually to root up any weed of bitterneſs, but cries as he to his brother, *I have enough my Brother.*

Having obtained satisfaction upon a promise made, it sings a requiem to it self, having secured its Beloved: the heart will willingly part with something, at least bind it self by promise so to do, if that will satisfie, though it presently break its promise, as *Sampson* his Withs.

7. A seventh Discovery of the deceitfulness of the heart, is the intimacy and inwardness that sin hath with the heart, whence it hath great advantage to exercise its deceit; and from hence 'tis called in-dwelling sin, and by the Apostle called the Law in the Members, *Rom.* 7. 23. and this deceit of sin not a Law proposed to us, but in-bred in us, and the former may not be compared for Efficacy with the latter; and therefore when the Lord promiseth to bring his People from under the power of the Law of sin, and to the obedience of the Law of Grace: he thus expresseth it, *I will put my Law in their heart, and write it in their inward part*, Jer. 31. 32, 33. We have an Example taken from the Law, which is contrary to this Law of sin, even the Law of Grace, which was in-bred in, and Natural unto Man in his estate of Innocency, being the rectitude of his faculties in Being and Operation with reference to his chief end of Glorifying God, and enjoying him for ever: Now, 'tis from hence that it receives its power in the

Soul

Soul to enable it to Obedience, and to make that Obedience sweet and easie; for this is the Nature of an internal Principle, and though this Law be obliterated in a great measure as to the Dominion it once had in the Soul, yet the remains of it are powerful and effectual, *Rom.* 2. 14, 15. And 'tis not now only an external Law, but an internal living Principle, for God knows the former without the latter, as it is now proposed, will never do: and therefore this is fixt upon by the Spirit, in the Prophet, as a discovery of its insufficiency, even the outward Law or written word as an outward means of inducing to Obedience; *this will never* (saith the Lord) *answer my end in the dispensation of it to a Soul or People, therefore will I walk with them in another way; I will change the outward Law into an internal living Principle, and this will make them my People, and keep them as such unto the end.* Now, the like Efficacy hath the Law of sin being an inward Principle: it induceth to Obedience, and is very powerful in subjecting the Soul thereto; for 'tis in the Soul as in its home or Mansion, there it abides, and quits not its dwelling: *Who shall quit me from this body of death*, saith the Apostle, *Rom.* 7. 24? Now, 'tis in the intimacy and inwardness that sin hath with the Soul, whereby 'tis rendred deceitful

above all things, and none can effectually deal with it but God alone.

8. Another piece of the hearts deceitfulnes lies in an unseasonable performance of Spiritual Duties, Spiritual performances are then untrue when untimely, and unsound when unseasonable: Now, the deceitfulnes of the heart lies in pressing other things as Lawful and necessary in the room and stead of Spiritual Duties: Thus those in the Parable denyed coming to the Marriage, and that upon the account of their Lawful Callings, but a gracious heart hath a ready Answer; these things ought to be first done, and those not to be left undone; every thing is beautiful in its season, where the heart prefers the love of these things before Duty and Obedience it cannot be right in the sight of God: Should I, says the deceitful heart, attend unto all Duties in this or that kind, strictly for Matter, Manner, Time, and End; I should neglect more principal occasions, and be useles to my self and others in the World; and through the working of this deceit in an unsearchable heart, particular businesses come to dispossess particular duties of their place and time, though God give us time enough for all that he requires of us in any kind; in this world no one Duty need to interfeir with another, nor need men be justly hindred from Glorifying God and saving their

own Souls; 'tis far more intolerable that Duties ſhould ſuffer than their Callings and Employments, though God hath given us time enough for both. But yet thus are Men beguiled through the deceitfulneſs of their hearts, and wholly taken off from the regular performance of all, or moſt of the Duties God requires at their hands; the Lord pardon our Seconding Satan in ſo curſed a deſign, and contributing ſo much to our own Miſery: and this is another particular wherein the deceit of the heart is made apparent.

9. Another piece of the hearts deceitfulneſs lies in this, in that we have not only our Old work to go over and over with, but new work to employ our ſelves about continually while we live in the World; new ſtratagems and wiles to deal withal, as the manner is, where unſearchableneſs and deceitfulneſs are to be contended with: Let us never account our work of Mortifying ſin to be at an end while the place of its habitation is found to be unſearchable: when we think our conflict with ſin is over, and our ſucceſs obtained, there is ſtill ſome reſerve remaining, not that we knew not of that we ſaw not; many have been Spiritually wounded after great ſucceſſes againſt this Enemy, becauſe they have given over their work before it was at an end: there is no way of purſuing ſin in its unſearchable holds

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but by being endleſs in our purſuit: and when this is vigorouſly and conſtantly carried on, the body of death is much weakned, and the Soul is much encouraged and carried on toward perfection; but there muſt be no fainting or giving over while we are in this World: the heart hath a thouſand wiles and wickedneſſes which we are not acquainted with; and if we are off in the leaſt from our Watch, we are ſure to be ſurprized: and hence are thoſe commands and cautions given out for Watching and Circumſpection; we that have to do with an Enemy deceitful above all things, can never be ſafe unleſs we perſiſt in ſuch a frame: it may be under ſome great Affliction, ſome eminent Enjoyment of God, under the ſenſe of the favour of bleſſed Communion with Chriſt; we have been ready to ſay, ſin was Mortified, but yet we have ſoon found by ſad Experience, what unſearchable receſſes it had in the heart, and what boylings up of new Corruptions, which none could acquaint themſelves with but God alone: How many are ſuddenly and ſadly ſurprized by ſins they never knew of, nor dealt with their heart about, but have been ready to quæry with their Corrupt hearts, as *Hazael* with the King, *Am I a Dog, that I ſhould do ſuch things as theſe?* And this is the Reaſon or Cauſe amongſt others of the purſuit of our War againſt ſin. When we

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are rising from under the impetuous assaults of some sin that we have daily occasion to acquaint our selves with in its Nature and Effects, we are again worsted with the successive assaults of new Corruptions, which have long dwelt securely in an unsearchable heart; and things being thus with us, our work must needs be difficult, spiritual, and flesh-displeasing.

10. The Hearts of Men are unmeasurably deceitful, in that they willingly employ all their deceits unto the Service of sin, and contribute them all unto its furtherance; hence is that Advice given, *Prov.* 4. 23. *To keep our hearts with all diligence.* When sin riseth up in the heart by deceit in the first motions and stirrings of it; importunity, yea, violence is commonly rested and rebuked, and when it returns again with new policy and power, is finally denyed by the Law of Grace; yet so many and powerful are the assaults of sin from deceit, that the Soul, though Armed with Grace, and under Command and Conduct of the Spirit, yet trembles thereat, and casts it self into the Arms of Christ for deliverance: And if this be neglected, it is assuredly worsted, and hurried through the mire and filth of hurtful and noysom Lusts: I say, hurried up and down through the power of foolish Imaginations, seeking Rest, but finding none:

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Sometimes by our negligence, sometimes by our carnal confidence to give check to sin, it makes its entrance upon the Soul, and finds entertainment; it gathers strength and power, and insensibly casts us into a sinful frame: therefore above or before all keepings, keep thy Heart, so the Original renders the word; you have many keepings that you attend unto, but above all keepings prefer that, attend unto that of the heart, and of the Affections, that they be not again ensnared and entangled with sin. There is, there can be no safety where this is neglected; save all and loose the heart, and the whole is betray'd into the hands of sin: Your Lives, Estates, Families, Reputations, all are considered and kept by you, but above all keep thy heart with diligence, for it improves all its deceits unto the service of sin: Sometimes we are ready to conclude a freedom from the hearts deceit as it prompts to, and prepares the way to sin, it may be upon some signal enjoyment of God, some full supply of Grace, some return from wandring, some deep affliction, some through humiliation, we are ready to abate our suspition of our hearts, and to much too lean to our own understandings: yet even here we may accuse our selves of Folly, because we find by sad Experience, that things with us are far otherwise: the heart is still engaged in the pursuit

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of Folly. Awake then, O sinner, down into thine own heart, rifle the Labyrinths, and break open the false bottoms there; see what of sin is in thee: is there any Darling sin, such as cogs with the Complexion, or falls in with thy Calling, or any way steals away thy heart and affections from God? be sure that this is an accursed thing, a *Delilah*, as the word imports, an exhauster of all that is precious in the Soul, how fair so ever it may look to sense, it is virtually wrath and sorrow unto thee: and 'tis the rather so from the willing contribution the heart gives to the furtherance thereof.

11. The deceit of the heart is further manifested in the retreats, shelters, or coverts that it hath for the safety and security of sin, and these are found to be sometime the minds darkness, the wills stubbornness, the affections deceitfulness, and many ways it hath to shelter sin by deceit: Now, deceit in the heart prevails considerably if we consider the Nature of it in general; which lies in a representation of things unto the Soul otherwise than indeed they are in themselves; and it represents them thus either in their Nature, Cause, Effects, or present Respects unto the Soul: and this it doth by hiding what ought to be seen, and considered by concealing circumstances, consequences, and thereby manifesting things that indeed

indeed are not, that the mind may make a falſe Judgment of them through deceit: Thus did *Jacob* deceive *Iſaac*, and theſe are the retreats and coverts for ſin; look upon ſin then as it is an evil, an only evil, infinitely more loathſom than the Dogs Vomit, or Swines Mire and filth, or Menſtruous Cloaths, by which things it is ſhadowed forth in Scripture: Arraign it as the greateſt Malefactor that ever was, call in Death and Hell, a curſed World and groaning Creatures, the ruines of Angels, and the Souls of Men, the Bloody Paſſion of Chriſt, and the wrong and Injuries done to God himſelf to bear witneſs againſt it: Each of theſe can tell ſad ſtories of it, and all will cry out, Crucifie it, Crucifie it: give it thence a doom that it may die accordingly; ſtrip it off its falſe nails and deceitful covers, its bewitching appearances; pull off its golden profits, and ſilken pleaſures and purple, of falſe honour, that it may appear as it is in its Native deformity, ſinful ſin, out of meaſure ſinful: ſometime 'twill ſtart in a thought, creep in at a ſenſe, or hide it ſelf under thoſe things that are Lawful, or ſo play with thy fancy till it perſwade thee to make a ſurrender of thy affection, and there it makes a Covert for it ſelf: And this is another Conviction of the deceitfulneſs of the heart, a plain diſcovery that it is deceitful above all things.

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12. *The Deceitfullneſs of the heart is further manifeſt, in that though it looſe its room in the Life and Affection, yet it retaines its indwelling in the Mind or Judgment.* There may be avoiding Temptations to ſin in the life, and a great withdrawing of that dear affection we once had for it, it may be, upon ſome great affliction, ſome ſignall diſappointment, it may be it hath been pregnant with ſcandall to thy name and reputation; or ſome way or other prejudiciall to thy Body or Eſtate, and this may cauſe thy affections to hang the wing, but the Mind may retain its liking and approbation; and a ſecret reſerve may lie hid for ſin. The hand of God in his Spirit may be high and ſtrong upon the Soul in conviction of ſin, and a ſenſe of its evill; and yet no vigour or power from a Spirituall liſe as its contrary at work, but rather a ſecret loathneſs in them to take upon them the yoak of Chriſt. Yea, ſometimes there may be a propenſity to the contrary; and the Soul had rather do any thing, embrace any diverſion, though it wound it ſelf thereby. If it pray, or meditate, it is even weary before it begins the work; and cries, when will the work be over? yet even here God and the Soul are immediately concerned. The ground of all this is the mind that ſhould be affected and concerned in this matter & ſhould be the great ſpring to move and determine the

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reſt of the Faculties by being furniſhed with the conſiderations that are prevalent with God, and by being in a readineſs to plead and manage them in the moſt ſpirituall manner, and to the beſt advantage; I ſay this leading Faculty retains its approbation and choice of ſin. Now 'tis not only difficult, but utterly impoſſible to get the Soul in ſuch a frame, as to lay out it ſelf to the utmoſt in hatred and oppoſition to ſin, to be clear and conſtant in this duty, while the Mind remaines thus affected. Now the enmity of the Mind, though it be the main, yet not only reaſon of this ſtate of things in the Soul: for another reaſon may be, the Minds want of a right underſtanding of the Duty it ſelf, and of the way of manageing the Soul in it. And thus you have another diſcovery of the hearts Deceitfullneſs, and that in none of the leaſt miſchiefs and evills which the heart abounds with in its depraved ſtate.

13. *The Deceit of the heart is further manifeſted, if we conſider, that upon the propoſal of a Temptation it ſeparates betwixt the Doctrine of Grace and the uſe and end thereof.* It dwells upon the Notions thereof, and intercepts its Influences in the proper application of it. From the Doctrine of the aſſured pardon of ſin, the heart inſinuates a regardleſsneſs of it; *Ephraim* (ſaith the Prophet) *loveth to tread*

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out the corn. He loved to work when he might eat, and alwayes to have the Corn before him; *but Ephraim shall plow,* (saith God) a labour needfull, though at present not so delightfull. Most men love to hear of the Doctrine of Grace, of the pardon of Sin, of Free Love, and suppose they find food therein, and 'tis evident they Thrive and Grow in the Life and Notion of them: but to be plowing up the Fallow Ground of their hearts, and to be searching after sin; this work they have no such delight in, though it be no less necessary than the former. Though the path of the exercise of Grace be not so trodden, as that of Knowledge and Notion; yet is it the only way to come to the true knowledge of Grace it self. how many Wise and grown in other things, have little skill in the search of their deceitfull hearts, and from the pleasure they profess in the Doctrine of the Gospel, therefore they supposed they really believed it: but herein lies the Deceit of their cursed heart, which might soon be prevented if they would but search them more and not trust them. God in Christ makes the proposition, and the Devil and the corrupt Deceitfull heart make the conclusion; even to grow regardless of sin from the Grace of God whereby it is pardoned. Now the Apostle declares in his reproof a detestation of such an insinuation, *Rom.* 6. 1.

Shall we continue in Sin that Grace may abound? God forbid. The deceit of the heart is apt to make that concluſion, but we give it not the leaſt countenance thereto. *Jude* confirms it for a Truth, that the hearts of men have improved this Deceit, though to their ruine and overthrow, *Jude ver. 4.. Ungodly men, turning the Grace of God into Wantonneſs.* And how many inſtances hereof have we in theſe dayes of ſin? the oppoſite to this, even grace, ſhews much of the Wiſdom and Power of Faith: for the Soul being caſt into the mould and forme of the Doctrine of Truth, about the full and free forgiveneſs of all ſin in the bloud of Chriſt, then to be able to keep the heart in a deep ſenſe of its own deceitfulneſs, and humiliation thereupon is a great fruit of Goſpel-Grace. And here you have a Touch-ſtone for the tryal of your knowledge, whether it be truly ſaving, yea or no. It empties the Soul of Fond and Falſe conceits of its own ſufficiency, if it be Genuine and of the right kind; and teacheth to water a free pardon with Tears: it teacheth us to watch for the diſcovery and ruine of thoſe heart-evills, which yet we are ſure ſhall never ruine us: but if it ſecretly and inſenſibly make men looſe and ſlight in their thoughts about ſin, 'tis a grand deceit of a carnal heart. And hence is that broken bleeding frame that we find many to walk

walk in, ſo that it is hard to know, whither to reduce their ſtate, whether to the Law or to Grace; and yet have a greater watch upon their hearts, and more conſciouſly tender of ſinning, or yielding to its deceits, than thoſe who abound with more Knowledge than themſelves. And thus you have another deceit of the heart detected, and the heart found to be deſperatly wicked.

14. *The deceit of the heart lies in the way of mannagement, which is inſeparable from it in all its deceits*; it is always carried on by degrees, by little and little, that the whole of the deſign and aim be not at once diſcovered. And thus did the Devil deal with our firſt parents in the Temptation that befell them: he proceeds in it by ſteps and degrees; firſt he takes off an Objection, by telling them *they ſhall not die*; and then propoſeth the good of Knowledge to them, and their being like God thereby, and all this was but to conceal and hide his own ends upon the whole from them. He gains upon them by deceit, and then makes uſe of what is gained to preſs on to further effects, from the whole thus ſtated to them. And thus did the *Egyptian* King deal with the *Iſraelites*, *Exod.* 1. he did not at the firſt attempt the cutting them off at once; but his way was (*ver.* 10.) *to deal craftily with them*; and thus it was

expreſt, for firſt he begins to oppreſs and burthen them until they cry out, and complain in the bitterneſs of their Soules; and this produceth and brings forth their bondage, *ver.* 11. Having this fair advantage for their Slavery and Vaſſallage, he proceeds to the murther of their Children, *ver.* 16. He falls not upon them at once, but proceeds by degrees; and thus we ſee the working of a deceitfull heart, which is perfectly known to God alone. It is from the Nature and inclination of the heart, and its own deſignings, that it is guilty of perpetrating in a great meaſure ſuch or ſuch evils. How doth the ſinner play with ſin, in the Fancy and Imagination, before the affection prey upon it, and it takes with the heart? There is a gradual approach and letting out of the heart unto ſin, that the deceit and wickedneſs of it may be the more indiſcernable and ſecure.

15. The next particular wherein the deceitfulneſs of the heart is manifeſt, is when the heart in part gives up it ſelf to ſin from a pretended wearineſs in its oppoſition unto it; and hence is that inſtruction, *Luke* 18. 1. *That Men ought always to pray, and not to wax faint.* And *Heb.* 12. 3. *That we be not weary nor faint in our minds.* There is an averſation in the heart Naturally unto immediate Communion in any Duty or Ordinance with the moſt

moſt Holy God. Now, ſuch is the Nature of ſome Spiritual Duties, that there is nothing more accompanying them whereby the carnal part may be indulged or gratified; and the deceitful heart pleads the advantage of its wearineſs, to withdraw it ſelf by inſenſible degrees from its oppoſition unto ſin in thoſe Duties. Now, in publick Duties there is ſomewhat of that Nature beyond pure Acts of Faith and Love, whereby the carnal part may be in part ſatisfied; but no relief then coming in by others, but what is purely Spiritual, they become a wearineſs, and burthenſome to fleſh and blood; this is like Travelling alone without a Companion or Diverſion, which makes the way ſeem long and tedious, but brings the Traveller with ſpeed to his Journeys end: and thus the Diſciples when according to their Duty and preſent diſtreſs they ſhould have been found much in the Duty of Watchfulneſs unto Prayer, their Lord finds them faſt aſleep: hence he remarks a weakneſs in the fleſh, but a willingneſs in the ſpirit, and from this weakneſs grew their indiſpoſition to, and wearineſs of their work; their hearts complying with the deceitfulneſs of ſin they are enſnared and taken, their oppoſition to it being neglected; ſin offering for the relief of the weak and weary fleſh, Spiritual and Natural fleſh do mutually aſſiſt and aid each other by ſinful complyance

in this matter. And thus it was in the Spouſe, *Cant.* 5. 2, 3. She was aſleep, drowſie in her Spiritual condition, and pleads her unreadineſs to ſhake her ſelf from that ſloth: Now, if the heart be not watchful to prevent and put by inſinuations of this Nature, if it ſtir not up the principle of Grace in the heart to retain its Rule and Sovereignty, and to put by, and refuſe all fleſhly inſinuations whatever; it will aſſuredly give up it ſelf in part to ſin, from a pretended wearineſs in its oppoſition to it: and this is another particular wherein the deceitfullneſs of the heart is very evident.

16. The next particular wherein the deceit of the heart is manifeſt, is, a willing ignorance where lye the beginnings of our failing and declenſions in the wayes of God; and that either as to our generall courſe, or to our diſcharge of particular duties. Now theſe things are of great concernment to us: when the beginnings and occaſions of a ſickneſs and bodily diſtemper are known, it is a great advantage to direct in and unto the cure of it. And hence God to recall Zion to himſelf, ſhews her where lay the beginning of their ſin, *Micah* 1. 13. Now here lyes the beginning of ſin to us, even the hearts being wanting in a due attendance in all things unto the diſcharge of its Duty. The Principal care and charge of a Chriſtian lyes

lies in the keeping and right management of his heart, and if he fail in that, the whole is betrayed, either as to its general frame, or as to particular miſcarriages. God looks not at the multitude, but at the manner of performances of particular Duties, whether they are done with that intention of Mind and Spirit that God requireth: would you therefore take the true meaſure of your ſelves, conſider how 'tis with you in this we are enquiring after; conſider whether by any of the deceits mentioned the heart hath not been diverted or drawn off from its Duty; and if there be decays upon you in any kind, you will find that there hath been the beginning of them, by one deceit or other, the heart hath been made ſlothful, uncertain, and regardleſs unto Duty, and being thus beguiled, hath loſt a full reward. And this is the fruit of a willing Ignorance, where lie the beginning of our declenſions in the ways of God: Let us then remember from whence we are fallen, and Repent, and do our firſt works again; let us try our works, as 'tis ſaid the Eagle doth her Young ones, even by a Sun-beam, many that undertake the profeſſion of Religion, and Duties conſequent thereupon, think not of their own frames in the diſcharge of them, their hearts are charged with other things, onely Duty takes up ſo much of their time; this is but to mock God

and deceive our ſelves: Alas, may ſuch a Soul ſay, had I been more punctually faithful in the diſcharge of Duty, and emptied my heart more of the World and ſin; if I had not been guilty of the abuſe of Goſpel-Grace by giving Entertainment to vain hopes and fooliſh imaginations, I had not been thus withered, decayed, ſick, weak, wounded, defiled; my careleſs, deceived, and deceitful heart hath been the beginning of Sin and Tranſgreſſion unto me. And thus you have another character of the hearts deceitfullneſs.

17. Another part of the hearts deceitfullneſs lies in a ſecret changing of the Matter of our Study and Affection, even the Sufferings and Croſs of Jeſus Chriſt. Our mind and thoughts being employed upon this as their Object, it hath an exceeding Efficacy towards the diſappointment of the whole work of the hearts deceitfullneſs. 'Twas this that Crucified the Bleſſed Apoſtle to the World, and the World to him, *Gal.* 6. 14. This his heart was ſet upon, and theſe were the effects of it. From the World doth the heart take the baits and pleaſures of ſin, with which being taken and enſnared, it proves Deceitfull. While the heart is filled with the Croſs of Chriſt it caſts a ſhade of death upon every thing beſide that; they have no excellency or deſireableneſs in them: it layes the ax to

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the root of sin and sinfull affections; and leaves no principle to go forth and make provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof. If thy heart be not attended; if it be not excited, directed, and warned by the study of the Cross of Christ; it will be apt to decay in its proper work, and sin lies in wait to take every advantage against it. Many complaints we have of this Nature in Scripture, of those *who lost their first love*, in living in the neglect of the study of the Cross of Christ; let us then be jealous over our own hearts, lest we also be overtaken with the like Deceitfull frame. Labour much then in the study of the Cross of Christ; consider the sorrows he underwent; the Curse he bore; the Bloud he shed; the Cries he put forth; the Love that was in all this to your Souls, and the Mystery of the Grace of God therein. Study the Vileness, Demerit and Punishment of Sin, as lively represented in the Death of Christ; and this will keep thy heart from diversions unto Sin, that in vain will the Snare be spread before thee. If the matter of our study were not secretly changed; and our heart Faint, Powerless, and seldom in Holy Meditation; Sin could have no access to our Souls. And thus you have another deceit of the heart discovered, and the great evil of Falling in therewith: the Lord help us to use the best remedies, and

bring

bring us to further Knowledge of our own hearts,

18. *The Deceitfullneſs of the heart is further manifeſted, in its frequent entertaining of, and imaginations about ſinfull Objects; from whence 'tis certainly entangled with the evil of Sin.* When the Heart ſtirs up frequent imaginations about the propoſed Object, which 'tis led forth and enticed unto through its own deceit; then ſin prevails, and the affections are gone fully after it: fills the Mind and poſſeſſeth it with images and appearances of it continually. Such perſons deviſe iniquity and practiſe it, when 'tis in the power of their hand to do it, *Micah* 2. 1. and *Peter* tells us *they have eyes full of Adultery*, they ceaſe not from ſin, their minds are poſſeſt with a continual repreſentation of the Object of their Luſts; and it is ſo in part, where the heart is in part intangled with ſin; and begins to turn aſide unto it: and *John* tells us of the things that are in the World; *the luſt of the fleſh the luſt of the Eye, and the Pride of Life*, 1 Joh. 2. 14. The Luſt of the Eye, is that which by them is convey'd unto the Soul: Now 'tis not the bodily ſenſe of ſeeing, but the fixing of the imagination from that ſenſe, that is here intended on ſuch things: and this is called the Eyes, becauſe things are conſtantly thereby re-

represented unto the Mind and Heart, as outward Objects are unto the inward sense by the Eyes: And thus *Achan* declares how his deceitful heart prevailed with him, *Josh.*7.21. about the Golden wedge and Babylonish garment; he employes his thoughts upon the Profit and Pleasure of them, and then his Heart goes forth deceitfully in projecting their possession: Now abiding thoughts with delight upon forbidden Objects, are in all Subjects and Cases actually sinfull: There may be a Lodging of vain thoughts in the Heart, as the Prophet speaks and complains, a thing sinfull and to be abhorred, and yet this may be where the consent of the will unto sin is not obtained. Thoughts may begin to lodge in the Mind about a matter or business, which yet the Soul would not doe for the world, though vain thoughts lodge about them: Yet even here there is required a narrow watch and study of the Heart, Thoughts being the Messengers to carry Sin from the Imagination to the Soul, and there make a Presentation of its worth; and in this the Soul is willingly deceived with a false shew and appearance thereof.

(19) The Deceit of the Heart will further appear in the *sinfull Reserves* the Heart enjoyes in every thing it doth, or is employed about

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in the Service of God. The deceitfull heart contents it ſelf with generals, to ſhift it ſelf from attendance unto things in particular Inſtances; it reſts ſatisfied with a general purpoſe of referring all things it doth or may do, to the Glory of God, without conſidering how every particular Duty may have a peculiar tendency and reference thereunto: Thus *Saul* thought he was perfect in the whole will of God, and had really deſigned his Glory, in the Service he perſormed in his war againſt *Amalek*, when for want of ſtudying and perſormance of every particular Duty belonging to that ſervice, (which is the ſinfull Reſerve we are now enquiring after) he diſhonours God, ſpoyls his Service, and ruines himſelf and his Poſterity with him. Men may flatter themſelves unto a ſatisfaction about their Ends and Actions in things, when they have no gracious Principle in Duties that have reference thereto: And thus the Young man in the Goſpel perſwades himſelf of his Integrity in what was done, and to be done, for the Glory of God and his own Salvation; yet a ſinfull Reſerve for the World lay hid in all this, and he went away ſorrowfull upon that difficult and fleſh-diſpleaſing Duty that Chriſt enjoyns him, which was indeed the Touch-ſtone of his ſincerity, and the tryal of what had paſſed before for real Grace; *Go ſell that thou haſt,*

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and take up my Croſs, and follow me, ſaith Chriſt, *Luke* 18. ver. 22. If a perſon travel a Journey it is not onely neceſſary that he direct his Courſe ſuch a way, and ſo proceed; but every turning and other Occurrence in his way muſt be obſerved, otherwiſe he may ſoon be loſt, and never attain his Journeys end. General aims at ſuch an End, will never help us to the reaching of it, unleſs we ply particular Duties that have ſpecial reference as the way thereto: And this can never be done where the heart hath one ſinful Reſerve to prey upon: Thus *Saul* cries in his Expedition againſt *Amalek*, *Come in thou bleſſed of the Lord*, (ſaith he to *Samuel*) *for I have done the Commandments of the Lord:* He is now comforting himſelf in the thoughts of his work done, though he had not attended the whole will of God in that matter, but ſome ſinfull Reſerve renders him and his work unacceptable: This alſo was their Condition, that we read of *Iſa.* 58. 3. *Wherefore have we faſted, ſay they, and thou regardeſt it not?* They had pleaſed themſelves in the performance of that and the like Duties, and conclude that God muſt be pleaſed alſo: But he plainly ſhews them wherein they had failed, which cauſed him to reject them; the Heart was deceitfull, having ſome ſinfull Reſerve in that Affair. Thus you have another Inſtance of this great Truth.

(20) The last general I shall insist upon as the undoubted Character of a deceitful Heart, is this; even *the sinfull and dreadful Division the Heart may admit of as to the Wayes and Truths of God*; and this may in some sence befall the Best as well as the Worst of men: Now in order to the making this great Truth plain, the Division of the Heart as direct contrary to that blessed Union whereby the Heart is mystically one with the Lord Christ, doth necessarily fall under a two-fold Consideration: (1) With respect to Enterance or Foundation union; and this is proper to the Wicked, who are naturally alienated to the Life of God, having no hope, but without God in the World. (2) There is a Division of the Heart in opposition to Union of Progress; and this may and doth befall the choycest of the Lords People: Here it is that the Heart may be much divided in respect of the imperfect work of Sanctification in the Soul: You may consider the whole of Heart-division as it may and doth befall the dearest of Gods Children in these few particulars.

1. So far as the Heart is under the Power of Lust, so far 'tis divided and estranged from God. This was the Case of blessed *Peter*, who once thought and really judged, that though all men should forsake Christ and the Truth,

Truth, either wholly, or as unto the degrees of Obedience and Holineſs they had once obtained, yet he would not; but we know what was the iſſue of that matter, how and wherein his deceitfull Heart impoſed upon him: He had Light into, and Conviction of his preſent Duty, with neceſſary and ſtrong Reſolutions to continue therein; yet even this ſecures him not from the Denyal of Chriſt: but here the Heart proves divided, and is miſerably impoſed upon by the Deceitfulneſs of ſin, having ſecret pretences to countenance it ſelf in complyance with the Temptation. And here I may ſadly aſſert, once for all, that there is ſcarcely any thing at this day in the world, wherein all ſober men do generally agree, except this alone; That the Hearts of all men do wax worſe and worſe; and that to ſuch a degree, that former Ages afforded no Preſidents: Few or no Inſtances are extant of the decreaſe and abatement of any one ſin in its Love or Practice, but rather men advance unto higher degrees of Confidence in its perpetration: How few Inſtances of ſpiritual Recovery from any of our decayes have we at this day! And this is a ſad proof, that the Hearts even of the Saints are much divided in point of Progreſs from the Wayes and Truths of God: The general Prevalency of this evil of Heart-deceit, ſo far as we are thereby ſubjected

jected to the power of Luſt, proclaims ſuch a danger, that no man that takes care of his own Salvation, ought or can neglect: Therefore let us watch, ſtand faſt, quit our ſelves like men, in taking to us the whole Armour of God: Let us be jealous of our own hearts; conſtant and diligent in the uſe of all Means publick and private, for our preſervation from the Deceit and Power of in-dwelling Sin; becauſe, ſo far as we are ſubjected to the curſed importunity thereof, ſo far we are ſeparate from the Fear of God, and Strangers, yea Enemies to a life of Practical Holineſs. And how regardleſs are we grown of Goſpel-Holineſs and Obedience, and while we differ about the Form, the inward Power thereof lies by neglected, no thriving deſign for the Retrival thereof being on foot! Alas, what coldneſs in Love is there, what Barrenneſs in Heart and Life among Profeſſors, what decay of Zeal, what heart-Adherence to the World, in the Love of it, though unſuited to our preſent State and Condition in it; what Neglect of Duty, what ſeldomneſs in Divine Viſitations, what want of Life and Delight in ſpiritual Communion with Chriſt; what hurtfull growth of carnal Wiſdom with its Attendants do we daily find in our hearts! Hereby we are ſadly degenerate in every thing that is heavenly, ſpiritual, through the craft of Sathan,

than, and the deceitfulneſs of our corrupt hearts: And if we will not yet be awakened by all this, if we will not ſtir up our ſelves with the Gifts and Graces which we have received; if we will pleaſe our ſelves that all is well, and like to continue ſo, and will walk with boldneſs and confidence in the way of the World and Sin: O that my Head were waters, and mine Eyes a Fountain of tears, that my Soul could mourn in ſecret for it: Know our inability to ſtand in this day of Temptation which is come upon all the world, to trye them that dwell on the Earth.

Object. But how may the heart be ſaid to be under the Power of Luſt, when the Apoſtle ſaith; *Sin ſhall not have dominion over us, for we are not under the Law, but under Grace?*

To this I anſwer, There is a two-fold Dominion of Sin in the Soul; the firſt, *habitual* and *univerſal*; and this is proper to the wicked and unregenerate, but wholly inconſiſtent with the Calling and Condition of a Saint: The ſecond, *particular* and *actual*; and this is poſſible in a ſtate of Saintſhip, and our Union with Chriſt may be much weakened thereby; and of this we have ſad Inſtances every day.

2. So far as we are decayed, and fallen away from the *degrees* of Holineſs and Obedience that we have attained, and that it may be for a long ſeaſon, and poſſibly with reſpect unto ſome eſpecial ſin, from which we are recoverable, and which doth not caſt us abſolutely under the power of it; yet ſo far as we are fallen into a dying condition in Spirituals, ſo far we are divided from the Wayes and Truths of God. Now decayes befall us ſometimes through the Power of ſtrong Temptations, the deceitfulneſs of the heart joyning with their own Sloth and Negligence; Corruptions, this or that, for a time, and in particular, may be too ſtrong for our Convictions, and after we have thought our ſelves above them, we may again be prevailed upon and overcome by them; one or other Luſt may grow ſo ſtrong in us, ſo habitual to us, that we may fall once and again under the power of it, untill it may be we have loſt much of the ſenſe of its Guilt, and more of Strength and Power to reſiſt it: Now ſo far as we are under the Decayes mentioned, ſo far is the Heart divided through the deceitfulneſs of Sin.

3. *So far as we are joyned to Idols, ſo far are we divided from God, his Ways, and Truths.*

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Any thing in the World beloved as God, or above him, is moſt certainly become an Idol to the Soul: and every thing, any thing, is more or leſs taking according to its ſuitableneſs to, and prevalency with the Mind. And were it not but that the Minds of Saints are powerfully influenced with reſerves for Heaven, and the things of Heaven; it were impoſſible they ſhould exceed the World in their Lives. The World is no Token of Gods favour, nor a Pledge of Bleſſedneſs to any in their ſins; much leſs deſigned an Idol to Saints, for whom 'twas principally purchaſed by by Chriſt: and yet how far are we wrought over to a complyance with with it through deceit. Unbelief, the Deceitfulneſs of Sin, Corrupt Luſts and Affections, Care about and Love of Riches, lie all in a readineſs to give advantage whereby ſome Idol may enter and take place in the Soul. Now though it be impoſſible that a Saint ſhould love the World above or in equality with God, yet may they be ſadly enſnared and entangled therewith. And to conclude, the various wayes whereby the World prevails with the deceitful Heart, ſhould warn us continually to ſtand upon our watch: did it work only one way, it might the more eaſily be withſtood: but when the methods are diverſe it works by, and the evils it runs us into, ſo many; we have need to ſtu-

dy our own Hearts, and keep them (if poſſible) with all diligence. How careleſs in Holy Duties, Cold in Zeal, Luke-warm in Love, Barren in Good Works, Cleaving unto, and Conformable to it, Low in our Light, Dubious in our ſtate, Uſeleſs in the World, Fearful, of Tryals, doth the World render us where 'tis immoderately affected. Theſe things being diſcovered, what manner of perſons ought we to be?

4. *So far as we are carnal and ſenſual in our Frames, ſo far is the heart divided from the Wayes, and Truths of God.* A Soul may be in a Spiritual ſtate, yet often found in a Carnal Frame: This was formerly a Spiritual Peſtilence, walking more in Darkneſs; but is now a Deſtruction waſting at Noon-day. There are in our Souls and Minds the ſame Principles of Sin, and Love of the World, as are in thoſe who are Denominated from nothing elſe; And how ſoon they may be excited and drawn forth, by outward occaſions and Temptations, and cauſed to iſſue, though in a partial Apoſtaſie, from the Wayes and Truths of God, we know not. The lives of many do expreſs that the more powerfull influences and extraordinary effects of the Word and Spirit are ſuſpended: and he that makes no obſervation of theſe things in himſelf, is ſomewhat ſick

ſick of the *Laodicean* diſtemper : And if we will not be ſtirred up and awakened to a more Holy Watchfull Frame, 'tis feared we may come to be in the condition of the Church of *Sardis*, to have a name to live, but to be dead. Several cauſes and effects there are of this Frame, we are now diſcourſing of; great ſurprizals, ſtrong Tempations, negligence in Watching againſt the deceitfulneſs of our hearts, may produce temporary abnegations of the power of the Goſpel, and woſull declenſions from the due obſervations of its commands, with wandring into fooliſh opinions; yet recovery may and muſt be had from all theſe, and we brought by Repentance unto Salvation : And this will render the deſpair of thoſe cauſeleſs, who are ever awakened in this World time enough from a courſe of ſining, deſtructive to their Souls. And thus I have now finiſhed the Twentieth diſcovery of a deceitfull heart ; the Lord grant that after all this, none may be ſelf-deceived, who read theſe lines : the wayes and workings of a deceitful heart are innumerable, and cannot be recounted : but the principal and moſt dangerous of them, I have here manifeſted as the Spirit and Word have ſupplyed in the ſearch; and yet after all this, we muſt lie down in ſorrow, and conclude with this weeping Prophet in the words of the Text, *The heart is*

deceitfull above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it? yet after all, we are comforted with an *I the Lord search the heart.*

(1) *Use of Information:* If the Heart be thus deceitfull, then the work of a Christian in contending with and mortifying of Sin, must needs be an endless work; because the Seat and Cittadell of this Tyrant is unsearchable; and when we have done all that we can in the Mortifying of sin, there are still Remains that we cannot discover. Thus was the Case with holy *David*, who was surprized into great Sin after a long Profession, manifold experiences of Gods goodness, and a watchfull observation and keeping himself from his Iniquity: Sin onely retires upon Mortifying work, into some unsearchable Recesses it hath got in the Heart, as to its Inbeing and Nature, though it be greatly weakened as to its Power and Effects; and yet what wisdom is wanting among most in the world! how little diligence is used by many, constantly to ply heart-work! If they can but safe-guard other Concerns, the heart is too much left to take its own course, and then hath it an advantage to exercise its deceit; Heart-deceit is never less inspected than in the use the heart is put to in keeping other things;

things; all Events depend upon a conſtant management of the heart againſt its deceits. Heart-work being conſtantly attended, the whole courſe of our Life here will be according to the Mind of God; and our End will be the Enjoyment of him for ever: And if this work be neglected, we do in a great meaſure labour in vain, whatever elſe we do. Bleſſed is he who thus feareth alwayes: This conſtant purſuit of Sin by Mortifying Acts, will make men carefully and conſcientiouſly to avoyd all Occaſions of all things that look like Deceit, or that may on any account have a tendency thereto, whether in their inward Frames, or outward Practices. Thoſe who have not taken in a ſenſe of their Danger in intermitting heart-work, will ſee little reaſon to concern themſelves with this Diſcourſe. There muſt be in ſuch a ſeaſon as this which is paſſing over us, a frequent calling our ſelves to an account, how things ſtand with us as to the inner man; what is the ſtate of our ſpiritual Life; whether our Faith, Love, doe thrive or decay, and whether God or the World do get ground in our Affections; and that Command of the Apoſtle, which we have *Coloſſ.* 3. 5. on this Account, is as neceſſary for them to obſerve, who are towards the end of their Race, as thoſe who are but at the beginning of it: *Mortifie therefore your mem-*

bers that are on the Earth; be alwayes doing of it while you live in the world. And indeed that which further discovers the Hearts Deceitfulness, is, in that all the opposition that ariseth in us to any thing that is spiritually good; whether it be from the Minds Darkness, the Will's stubbornness, or sloth in the Affections, with all the secret Arguings and Reasonings that are in the Soul in pursuit of them; the direct Object of them is God himself: And this should influence us to a perpetual contending with, and opposition to sin. If the Heart give out or slack in its opposition to sin, we shall quickly see this Enemy exerting it self with new strength and Power: And this is the first Branch of this Use.

(2) If the Heart be deceitful above all things, this calls for *perpetual Watchfulness* over it; and the Reason is at hand; Because, neither negligence in the study of our own Hearts, nor a Confidence reposed in them, that they will be alwayes true unto their spiritual and eternal Interest, is neither the Rule of our present Duty or future Judgement: If a strict Watch be not kept upon the Heart, 'twill suddenly lose it self in Worldliness, carnal Wisdom, Negligence of holy Duties, and Barrenness in all the Fruits of the Spirit: And that nothing is got hereby, yea that all

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will be loſt at laſt, heart, and world, and every thing wherein we are concerned, the Holy Ghoſt teſtifies in variety of Scripture-warnings. Let us then be diligently attentive unto the Deceits of our own Hearts; a bold and hazardous, careleſs frame of ſpirit, venturing on all Companies and Temptations, complying with Vanity, and profane or worldly Communication, and led into by-wayes of Sin, through the cunning ſleights of the Heart that lie in wait to deceive, is that which hath and will ruin thouſands in the world; when ſelf-jealouſie, humility, and fear of offending, are by experience found to be ſoul-preſerving Graces: Doth the Heart promiſe fair, reſt not on it, but lean upon Chriſts undertaking for thee: Doth the Sun ſhine glorioufly in the Morning, reckon not therefore on a fair day, the Clouds may riſe, and rain fall, though the Morning give a fair appearance. The Heart may make a fair ſhew of things, all may ſeem to be in ſerenity and peace, when turbulent Affections may preſently ariſe, and cloud the Soul with Sin and Darkneſs; An open Enemy in the Field that deals by violence only, and intends to give a pitched Field-battle, alwayes gives ſome reſpite; you can acquaint your ſelves with his Motions, and what he intends, but againſt Treachery and Deceit, private Ambuſhes, nothing ſecures but con-

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tinual Watchfulneſs: There is no living for them who have to deal with an Enemy deceitful above all things, unleſs they perſiſt in ſuch a frame; let us then watch our hearts with reference to Duty and Danger: For though Temptations abound with Circumſtances, encreaſing their Efficacy, yet the beginnings of Deceit are in our own Hearts: For the different Effects that theſe things have upon the Minds and Lives of men, is principally from themſelves; as they are carefull and watchfull over themſelves in a way of Duty on the one hand, or ſlothfull and negligent on the other hand; ſo are they prevailed againſt or preſerved in Temptations: Let there be then a ſpeedy exerciſe of our utmoſt wiſdom in ſafeguarding our hearts from what is evil, and this will anſwer the advice the Apoſtle gives, and finally preſerve us from the errour of the wicked: 'Tis only Regenerating Grace that can dry up in a great meaſure the Springs of Sin; and Holineſs in the Life, abates the ſtreams and actings of it; yet where there are (as there will be in the beſt) the Remains of it, the Heart is ſtill deceitfull above all things, and therefore calls for the ſtricteſt Watch.

(3) If the heart be deceitfull above all things, than hence be informed, that 'tis the great concern of the people, and a duty highly incumbent on them, to commit the whole buſineſs with all care and diligence, unto him who can ſearch the heart to the uttermoſt; and can graciouſly prevent all its Treacheries and Deceits. In the things before diſcourſed, lies our duty; but here lies our ſafety. There is no dark corner of our hearts but he can ſearch it; no Deceit but he can diſappoint it: This courſe *David* took, *Pſ.* 139.23. *Search me O Lord, and try me*; as if he had ſaid, the moſt of what I know of my Deceitfull heart, is but the leaſt part of what I am ignorant of: I cannot Trace the Turnings and Windings of it, only let me be ſincere and without offence, and have no reſerves for ſin hid in me. The keeping of our hearts awake, and attentive unto their relief, is that that preſerves us from utter ruine. *I have prayed for thee, (* ſaith Chriſt unto *Peter) that thy Faith fail not*; and if the heart be once hindred for looking up to God, for releif by Grace; it will eaſily be induced to take up with any thing. They who ſee not their danger, will ſee little reaſon to be inquiſitive after releif, or to look out for ſuccour and refuge againſt a time of need; and the

the beginnings and progreſſive workings of deceit in the heart, are oft-times ſo Secret and Imperceptible as to us, that we greatly need Knowledge and Direction from Chriſt; and we are oft-times apt to ſay in our ſelves, what or whom ſhould a man truſt, if he cannot repoſe Confidence in his own heart, though at the ſame time the heart is a ſupplanter? The beginning of all Deceit (which is an aſſured entrance into all evil) lies in mens leaving their hearts unto themſelves, and truſting in them, without committing them unto Chriſt, and that in a continual application unto him, for Directing, Aſſiſting, Preſerving, Eſtabliſhing Grace. If this be neglected, our hearts are ready to yield to any, under the power of which, Satan or the World ſhall have a mind to draw them. The preſſing of this Duty is uſefull, yea needfull, to maintain a courſe of obedience at all times: and that which is aimed at, is the Exerciſe and Diſcharge of the Duties now diſcourſed; with reſpect unto the Evil and Danger under conſideration. Now if we are found in the utmoſt of our Duty, we ſhall have cauſe to rejoyce (in the Grace of God) in our preſervation and deliverance from heart-deceit: But if we be ſlothfull and ſecure, what hopes can we have that we ſhall Reſiſt and Conquer the Evils that do ſo eaſily beſet us. The ways wherein the Deceitfull

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heart puts forth Efficacy, are so secret and various, and the Current furthered by so many and various Temptations; lying strongly against us, that they are not to be numbered. Let us then maintain a watchfull care over our own hearts, and a studious endeavour in the use of all means, for their preservation in Soundness of Doctrine, and Holiness of Life. And here lye the springs of the whole course of our obedience; an acquaintance with the several principles of the heart, and their diverse actings, is the principal part of our wisdom (next to Free Grace) in our Justification through the Blood of the Lamb. Great care is then to be used in the management of our hearts and wayes before God; otherwise all things will quickly be ruinous in our state. Where the Subjects of a Prince are in Feuds and oppositions one against another, great Wisdom must be exercised in that government, or it is impossible it should ever be preserved. Our Obedience, and consequently out Eternal condition will be much influenced in the right ordering of this Affair. O you in whose hearts are any thing of the wayes of God, leave not your hearts till you have wisely committed them and their affairs unto him: for there is a constant Enemy unto this in every one of us; and what an Enemy it is, hath in part been discovered. How do we Live and Walk as if

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we had no enemy to encounter; Though our Folly and Miſtake be evident in the whole of our progreſs in the ways of God. If ye would not diſhonour God, nor offend the Generation of thoſe that fear him, nor blemiſh his ways, and wound your Conſciences; endanger your Souls, nor grieve the Holy Spirit; if you would keep your Garments clean, and Eſcape the Temptations and Pollutions of the World, and be preſerved from Apoſtaſie, whether wholly or in part; let us gird our ſelves unto the diſcharge of this Duty: the neglect hereof inferrs innumerable other evils, and is the cauſe of the ruin of thoſe that periſh in this World.

(4) Is the heart deceitful above all things? Why then Saints may know to whom they owe their preſervation upon all accounts and not look on it as a common thing: When the heart hath conceived ſin by deceit, hath the Lord cauſed it to prove abortive, and ſo delivered you from the impending evil of ſuffering; know aſſuredly you have received mercy thereby, though God deal not theſe mercies alwayes in a ſubſerviency to the Covenant of Grace: And had not God dealt thus with you in your condition, it may be you had been a Terrour to your ſelves, a ſhame to your Relations,

lations, and under punishment due to sin as its effect; yea useless to your selves and others in the World: Besides there is an additional guilt alwayes attending the act of sin, above what the meer conception hath in it. Others might have been drawn into a partnership with you in sin, and so have suffered for ever on that account; so that the World is abundantly bettered upon such Providences as these, and the heart restrained from being so deceitful and desperately wicked as it would appear. 'Twas God that spake to wicked *Abimelech*, and said, *I have with-held thee from sinning against me*, Gen 20. 6. And herein lies one part of the mysteries of Free Grace, Gods meeting the heart in the highest resolutions unto Sin and Wickedness, with the highest Efficacy of Supplying, Renewing Grace: Hereby he manifests the Choisest of his Love, and gives the Heart Experience of its deceitfulness at all times; filling it with shame and Sorrow in the Conception. God insinuates such Love and Kindness, that it Effectually takes off the heart from sin: in Gods dispensation, though he meet us every day in full purposes to sin against him, through the deceitfulness of our hearts; yet he graciously recovers us to an obediential frame of Heart again. When the Soul lies at the brink of some iniquity, he frequently shews his care

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and Faithfulneſs in diſappointing the Heart, and giving Deliverance: he ſuffers them not to be worried with the reſtleſs importunity of Deceit; and thereby carried forth unto wayes that will diſhonour God, fill them with ſhame, ſorrow, and render them uſeleſs to themſelves and others in the World. Look not on theſe things as common then, but know your keeper, and own his preſervation of you from manifold evils. Let theſe things lie warm upon your hearts, provoking of you to a Faithfull diſcharge of thoſe Duties wherein your ſafety and Gods Glory are ſo nearly concerned. Thus you have the Fourth Inference improved.

(5) The laſt Uſe is this; If the heart be thus Deceitful above all things, then ſee hence the great uſe of Magiſtracy in the World; a great and ſignal inſtitution of God in concurrence with others, for the accompliſhment of moſt Holy and Wiſe ends, peculiarly mannaged by the good providence of God, to obviate the ſuperfluities and exceſſes of a deceitful heart: and this is done by the Majeſty and Terrour of him that bears not the Sword in vain. God fixes this on the heart of all men. *Rom.* 13. 4. *If thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for the Power beareth not the Sword in*

in vain, for he is the Minister of God, a revenger to execute Wrath on them that do evil. The principal use of Magistracy lies in a blessed Subserviency to the Providence of God, in hindring the production of much Sin in the World. When there was no Judge in *Israel*, every one did what was right in his own eyes; every mans right invaded, and nothing secured, for there was none to be a Terrour to the workers of evil; no restraint or law given to their Lusts, as we see by the story in the last Chapter of the Book of *Judges*. Now the prevention of evil by the interposition of the Sword between the Act and Thought, is the greatest blessing in the World, next to those of the Gospel and Covenant of Grace, without this the World would be but a field of Bloud, woful work and havock would be made amongst men in the World; but God hedges up our way by Mercifull Providences, and drawes the Sword for a Terrour unto the Wicked, and a Praise to those that are found in Well-doing. Are we at peace in our houses, at rest in our Beds? have we any Enjoyments untouched? for this we are beholding to a mercifull Providence that always attends us with a watchfull eye. Whose person would not be destroyed or defiled? whose Habitation would not be Ruined? and whose Blood not shed if a secret Invisible Power did not divert?

and to this we are beholding, for what is or may be dear to us.

And now I have done, what remains to make these few sheets a blessing to many, but a constant Exercise of Faith and Prayer; which alone can quicken and make them fruitfull? Therefore that I may express my self in the Churches Language, *Till the day break, and the shadowes flee away, I will get me to the Mountains of Myrrhe, and to the Hills of Frankincense* : that is, to a constant lively Exercise of the mentioned graces, as the Blessed Spirit shall give assistance; and without this all our Studies and Labours will be but vain and insuccessfull, and our selves in the end must lie down in Shame and Sorrow. We shall loose our Crown and the World, their Souls and that Eternal State of Blessedness, for which they were created. That which hath been the subject of this Discourse, is granted to be in part insisted on by others; therefore my design is only to endeavour farther to carry on the discovery of heart deceits, in its actings and oppositions to the Grace of God in Believers, and in the tenders and offers of it to the Souls of sinners : And many things there are at present which seem to call for this work as necessary. The fruit of a Deceitful heart in the Lives and Decayes of many in point of Holiness, and the Scandals and Miscarriages

carriages that others are chargeable with; do ſeem to invite to a following on the work: and of how great uſe the things diſcourſed are to Watchfulneſs and Diligence, to Faith and Prayer, Repentance, Humility, and Soul-Abaſement; the ſtudy and improvement of them will make to appear.

FINIS.

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